

## Member Highlight – Dr. Selina F. Gutierrez

Dr. Selina Fuentes Gutierrez is a Laredo native who came to San Antonio in 2014 to attend UT Health San Antonio School of Dentistry, graduating in 2018. She then completed the Advanced Education in General Dentistry residency at UT Health San Antonio.



Dr. Selina Gutierrez and her husband Ramon

Dr. Gutierrez started her career as an associate dentist in San Antonio for over 3 years while honing and expanding her clinical and management skills. She is active in several dental organizations and the San Antonio Women's Chamber of Commerce and volunteers her time regularly with various community groups. Dr. Gutierrez is a 2022 and 2023 nominee for the prestigious Texas Academy of General Dentistry's New Dentist of the Year Award due to her commitment to continuing education and community involvement.

Dr. Gutierrez recently purchased the practice of Dr. Joan Dreher and Dr. Ernie Luce, naming it Inwood Family Dental, and she graciously answered a few questions about this transition

**Was it always your plan to own a practice, or did the desire to be a practice owner grow “organically” after residency?**

My desire to become a practice owner was influenced by my independent nature and my experiences working in different practice settings post-residency. There were several benefits to working with another dentist and in a corporate office, such as mentorship as a new dentist and less administrative duties. Ultimately, I chose to become a sole owner to have the autonomy to make decisions on practice management, the types of services I offer, and the quality of care I can provide to patients.

**How did you end up purchasing the practice of Drs. Dreher and Luce? What aspects of this practice appealed to you most?**

In my first associateship, I almost completed a practice transition when the sale fell through. I was a novice at transitions and negotiating, and I had limited knowledge of practice management styles. That experience was pivotal in shaping how I approached future transitions.



Dr's Luce, Dreher, Gutierrez and Ramon Gutierrez

I spent time working in different settings, researching practice finances, developing business acumen, and building a strong practice transition team. I subscribed to several practice transition companies' emails and expanded my network.

I was even considering the option of a startup or partnership when Dr. Dreher's practice listing came up in a McLerran & Associates email.

From my initial review of the practice and my knowledge of both Dr. Dreher & Dr. Luce's professional standing, I knew I had found a gem.

This small 4-operative practice had been a fixture in the Inwood/Deerfield neighborhoods and had long-standing staff and loyal patients of 26 years. From the dust-free shelves to the alphabetized and boxed lab cases, I knew I had found someone that took pride in her practice and was as meticulous as I am.

**What are some non-clinical things that you learned as an associate dentist that you think will help guide you as a practice owner?**

Prior to ownership, I had the opportunity to work in both a fee-for-service practice and a corporate practice. From private practice, I learned the values of patient-centered care, staff loyalty and retention, and practicing for self-sustainability. On the other hand, from corporate practice, I learned how to be efficient and productive. This is where I learned the importance of targeted marketing strategies and how to make the most of insurance benefits. Although these are differing experiences, I feel I could not be the business owner I am today without this more holistic approach at practice management.

**How has being involved in organized dentistry leadership contributed to your personal and professional growth?**

I am especially fortunate for the opportunity to be a Board of Director of the SADDS and to serve as Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Through the SADDS, I have created long-lasting friendships and a network of trusted specialists and colleagues. During my job searches, Shannon at the SADDS office was the first person I called. The SADDS office has supported me and aided me in finding available positions. I am grateful for the opportunities I have gained by being a member of SADDS, such as participating in the ADA's Institute for Diversity in Leadership program and being nominated for Texas AGD's New Dentist of the Year award for 2022 and 2023.

**Are you a member of other dental organizations?**

I am a proud member of the Hispanic Dental Association (HAD), AGD and ADA. In the past, I have served as President of the Greater San Antonio Hispanic Dental Association (GSAHDA), and I am now serving as the Continuing Education Chair. For the AGD, I am currently on the New Dentist Committee for the TAGD, planning our upcoming A Pathway 2 Fellowship Program.

**If you could go back to your first year of dental school, knowing what you know now, what would be the #1 thing you'd tell yourself?**

Immerse yourself in networking and developing your leadership skills. Get involved with your local dental societies and your university. The more you grow your network, the more opportunities you will have when you start looking for a job, buying a practice, and/or exploring leadership roles in various organizations.

**Finally, how do you like to spend your free time?**

Outside the office, I enjoy networking, participating in organized dentistry, and volunteering. In my spare time, I love travelling with my husband, cooking healthy foods, and working out at Spenga.